

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FOLLOWING REPEAT MADRAS 1705 SENT ACTION NEW DELHI

INFO BOMBAY/CALCUTTA 17 SEP 76.

QUOTE:

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MADRAS 1705

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: KARUNANIDHI RESPONDS TO PRIME MINISTER'S CHARGES

REF: (A) MADRAS 1677; (B) MADRAS 1684

1. SUMMARY. DMK PRESIDENT M. KARUNANIDHI ANSWERED THE CHARGES MADE AGAINST THE DMK AND HIMSELF BY THE PRIME MINISTER ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS DURING HER TWO-DAY TOUR OF TAMIL NADU. HE STATED THAT THE DMK HAD FORSWORN SEPARATISM IN 1963 AND THAT DEMANDS FOR AUTONOMY HAD BEEN MISCONSTRUED. KARUNANIDHI WELCOMED THE PRIME MINISTER'S ASSURANCES ON THE LANGUAGE ISSUE AND SAID THAT THE DMK HAD GREATLY SUFFERED TO DEFEND TAMIL NADU AGAINST THE IMPOSITION OF HINDI. WHILE BRAVELY WELCOMING THE SARKARIA COMMISSION HEARINGS, THE DMK PRESIDENT TRIED TO PREPARE HIS PEOPLE FOR THE DAY WHEN HE WOULD NOT BE WITH THEM. END SUMMARY.

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2. AT A MEETING HELD IN MADRAS THE EVENING OF SEPTEMBER 15

TO COMMEMORATE THE BIRTHDAY OF DMK FOUNDER C. N. ANNADURAI, DMK PRESIDENT AND FORMER CHIEF MINISTER OF TAMIL NADU M. KARUNANIDHI RESPONDED TO THE CHARGES AND CRITISMS LEVELED AT THE DMK BY THE PRIME MINISTER DURING HER TWO-DAY TOUR OF TAMIL NADU DROUGHT AREAS. HE REMINDED THE DMK FAITHFUL PACKING THE HALL THAT THE DMK AS A MOVEMENT HAD GIVEN UP THE PHILOSOPHY OF SEPARATISM 13 YEARS AGO AND THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HERSELF HAD MADE A REFERENCE TO THE FACT THAT THE DMK HAD FORESWORN SEPARATISM IN A SPEECH GIVEN IN OCTOBER 1973. SHE ACKNOWLEDGED AT THAT TIME THAT THE PARTY HIERARCHY HAD GIVEN UP SEPARATISM AND THAT NONE OF THEM "HAS BEEN RAKING UP THE ISSUE" ALTHOUGH THERE WERE SOME LOWER-LEVEL MEMBERS WHO BORDERED ON SEPARATIST PROPAGANDA WHEN THEY TALKED OF STATE AUTONOMY. KARUNANIDHI ADMITTED THAT IT WAS TRUE THAT SOME DMK MEMBERS HAD SPOKEN VIOLENTLY OF A SEPARATE TAMIL STATE IN THE PAST AND THAT A SMALLER NUMBER, INCLUDING SCREEN IDOL M. G. RAMACHANDRAN (MGR-- NOW HEAD OF THE ALL-INDIA ANNA DMK--THREATENED TO FACE THE INDIAN ARMY IF NECESSARY AND VOWED THAT "RIVERS OF BLOOD WOULD FLOW IN TAMIL NADU IF THE DEMAND FOR AN INDEPENDENT TAMIL NADU WERE NOT CONCEDED BY THE CENTER." SUCH EXTREMISTS, KARUNANIDHI POINTED OUT, WERE NOT IN THE DMK BUT WERE IN OTHER CAMPS SUCH AS THE AADMK. HE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT DEMANDS FOR STATE AUTONOMY SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH SEPARATISM, FOR THE DMK CALLED FOR AUTONOMY FOR ALL THE STATES AND NOT TAMIL NADU ALONE. THE PRIME MINISTER WAS THEREFORE HUMBLY REQUESTED TO LOOK AGAIN AT THE POLICY STATEMENTS OF THE DMK SINCE 1963 AND TO RE-EXAMINE THE RECORD OF THE MANY OCCASIONS THAT THE DMK MINISTRY HAD ACTIVELY COOPERATED WITH AND ASSISTED THE GOI AND THE PRIME MINISTER.

3. KARUNANIDHI TOLD HIS AUDIENCE THAT HE HAD GONE THROUGH MRS. GANDHI'S RECENT SPEECHES VERY CAREFULLY AND HAD READ HER ANGRY REMARKS DIRECTED AGAINST THE DMK AND HIMSELF ON THE ISSUES OF SEPARATISM AND ALLEGED MALADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE. AMIDST THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE, KARUNANIDHI APPEALED TO MRS. GANDHI: "I WOULD REQUEST THE MADAM TO TAKE US (THE DMK) ALSO INTO YOUR PROPAGANDA FRONT AGAINST SEPARATISM, FOR, I ASSURE YOU, WE CAN DO A BETTER JOB

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THAN ANYONE IN THIS REGARD." HE DEEPLY REGRETTEED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S PROVOCATIONS AGAINST HIM AND THE DMK WERE BASED ON FALSE AND MALICIOUS REPORTS MADE TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE GOI BY THE TNCC AND POLICE INTELLIGENCE OFFICIALS. THE DMK LEADER THEN TURNED THE ATTENTION OF HIS AUDIENCE TO A BOOK ON LENIN WHICH DETAILED HOW THE POWERFUL ANTI-LENIN PRESS IN RUSSIA HAD PILE UP INCREDIBLE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST HIM. SOME OF HIS FOLLOWERS DESERTED HIM. BUT LENIN OVERCAME

THESE SLANDERS AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION CAME INTO BEING. BUT IN SAYING THIS, KARUNANIDHI THEN SAID, "I DO NOT WANT ANYONE TO SAY THAT I AM DRAWING A COMPARISON BETWEEN LENIN AND MYSELF."

4. WELCOMING THE PRIME MINISTER'S ASSURANCE THAT HINDI WOULD NOT BE IMPOSED ON THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, KARUNANIDHI REMINDED HIS PEOPLE OF THE SACRIFICES AND HARDSHIPS THAT THE DMK HAD ENDURED DURING

GREAT ANTI-HINDI AGITATIONS OF PAST YEARS. HE RECALLED THE LIVES THAT HAD BEEN LOST, THE DMKERS WHO HAD DIED IN SELF-IMMOLATION.

5. WITH CHARACTERISTIC BRAVADO, KARUNANIDHI REITERATED HIS WHOLEHEARTED WELCOME TO THE SARKARIA COMMISSION AND SAID THAT HE LOOKED FORWARD TO APPEARING BEFORE THE COMMISSION WHEN IT SAT IN MADRAS ON SEPTEMBER 20. BUT KARUNANIDHI, COULD NOT HELP BUT ACKNOWLEDGE, DESPITE HIS BRAVADO, THAT HIS DAYS WERE NUMBERED AND THAT THE PARTY FAITHFUL SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR THE INEVITABLE. HE DECLARED, HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT SEVERAL OTHER KARUNANIDHIS WOULD SPRING UP FROM THE DMK. HE APPEALED TO THE RANK AND FILE TO SAFEGUARD THE DMK --"WHICH IS NOW A BIG FAMILY AND HAS GROWN TO BE A BIG TREE"--FROM BEING DESTROYED BY ITS ENEMIES.

6. COMMENT: DESPITE THE DAMOCLEAN SWORD HANGING OVER HIS HEAD, KARUNANIDHI HAS CONTINUED HIS TRAVELS THROUGHOUT TAMIL NADU TO BE ACCLAIMED BY THOUSANDS WHO HAVE MOBBED HIM AT EVERY STOP AND HAVE DONATED SMALL AMOUNTS TO HIS LEGAL DEFENSE FUND. HIS TOUR PROGRAMS ARE PUBLISHED IN ADVANCE ONLY IN THE DMK TAMIL DAILY, MURASOLI, OR ARE SPREAD BY WORD OF MOUTH. KARUNANIDHI USES FUNCTIONS SUCH AS MARRIAGES OR FUNERALS OF PARTY WORKERS TO MEET THE DMK FAITHFUL IN VARIOUS PLACES AND NEVER MISSES SUCH OPPORTUNITIES. FOR A MAN SUPPOSED TO BE DISGRACED AND HUMILIATED, A MAN WHO HAS FACED EVERY INSTRUMENT THAT A DETERMINED GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ABLE TO THROW AGAINST HIM AND HIS PARTY SHORT OF INCARCERATION, HE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TOURS THE CITIES AND RURAL AREAS UNDAUNTED BY THE FORCES ARRAYED AGAINST HIM. IT MAY NOT BE AN EXAGGERATION TO SAY THAT KARUNANIDHI IS PROBABLY THE MOST COMPLETE AND CHARISMATIC POPULIST POLITICIAN IN INDIA TODAY. CONSIDER A MAN WHO CAN SAY THIS TO HIS PEOPLE AND MOVE THEM TO TEARS, AS HE DID ON AUGUST 20 IN COIMBATORE: "WHETHER IT IS GOING TO BE CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST ME, OR LIFE IMPRISONMENT, OR GALLOWS, OR ANY ALTAR WHERE I MAY BE TORTURED OR KILLED, I HAVE THIS GREAT CONFIDENCE THAT I HAVE A PLACE IN THE ALTAR OF YOUR HEARTS. HENCE I CONTINUE TO SPEAK TO YOU AND WRITE TO YOU." AND THE PEOPLE LISTEN.
SCOTT

UNQUOTE.
SAXBE

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